

TITLE VIII
SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

CHAPTER 43
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670] Ch 22]

DIVISION I
TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

281—43.1(285) Intra-area education agency routes.

43.1(1) Bus routes within the boundaries of transporting districts as well as within designated areas must be as efficient and economical as possible under existing conditions. Duplication of service facilities shall be avoided insofar as possible.

43.1(2) A route shall provide a load of at least 75 percent capacity of the bus.

43.1(3) The riding time, under normal conditions, from the designated stop to the attendance center, or on the return trip, shall not exceed 75 minutes for high school pupils or 60 minutes for elementary pupils. (These limits may be waived upon request of the parents.)

43.1(4) Pupils whose residence is within two miles of an established stop on a bus route are within the area served by the bus and are not eligible for parent or private transportation at public expense to the school served by the bus, except as follows:

a. Bus is fully loaded.

b. Physical handicap makes bus transportation impractical.

All parents or guardians who are required by their school district to furnish transportation for their children up to two miles to an established stop on a bus route shall be reimbursed pursuant to Iowa Code subsection 285.1(4).

43.1(5) Transporting districts shall arrange routes to provide the greatest possible convenience to the pupils. Distance pupils who are required to transport themselves to meet the bus shall be kept to the minimum consistent with road conditions, uniform standards and legal requirements for locating bus routes.

43.1(6) Each bus route shall be reviewed annually for safety hazards.

281—43.2(285) Interarea education agency routes.

43.2(1) Joint consultation shall be held by the area education agency boards involved. The initial steps may be undertaken by the area education agency administrators. If there are no difficulties and agreement is reached, the route is approved and no further action need be taken.

43.2(2) If agreement is not reached in the initial attempt, the administrator of the area education agency in which the applying school is located shall advise the superintendent of reasons for failure to reach agreement and request that the superintendent revise the transportation plan to meet the objection and resubmit same.

43.2(3) If the area education agency boards do not reach agreement on the route, the home area education agency administrator shall forward the complete record of the case together with disapproved transportation plan to the state department of education. Every effort should be made, however, to settle the matter locally.

43.2(4) All legal provisions, standards and regulations applying to approval and operation of bus routes apply equally to interarea education agency bus routes.

43.2(5) All interarea education agency bus routes must be approved each year. If there has been no change in the designations, nor in the proposed route, transportation plan may be made and agreement indicated by letter.

DIVISION II
PRIVATE CONTRACTORS

281—43.3(285) Contract required. All private contractors wishing to transport pupils to and from school in privately owned vehicles must be under contract with the board of education. This requirement will not apply to individuals who transport their own children or other children on a not-for-hire basis.

The contract form used shall be that provided by the department of education. (Form TR-F-4-497)

281—43.4(285) Uniform charge. The contract must provide for a uniform charge for all pupils transported. No differentiations may be made between pupils of different districts except as provided in Iowa Code section 285.1(12).

281—43.5(285) Board must be party. The contractor may not arrange with individual families for transportation. The contractor undertakes to transport only those families indicated by the board of education.

281—43.6(285) Contract with parents. Parents, guardians, or custodians undertaking to transport other children for hire, in addition to their own, are private contractors. These individuals must be under contract, and must obtain an appropriate driver's license and a school bus driver's authorization.

281—43.7(285) Vehicle requirements. Any vehicle used, other than that used by individuals to transport their own children or other children on a not-for-hire basis, is considered to be a school bus and must meet all requirements for the type of vehicle used. (This requirement is not intended to restrict the use of passenger cars during the time the vehicles are not actually engaged in transporting school pupils.)

DIVISION III
FINANCIAL RECORDS AND REPORTS

281—43.8(285) Required charges. Full pro rata costs must be charged and collected for the transportation of all nonresident pupils. No differentiation may be made in charges due to differences in distance or grade in school.

281—43.9(285) Activity trips deducted. Transporting school districts which use their equipment for activity trips, or educational tours, or other types of transportation services as permitted in Iowa Code sections 285.10(9) and 285.10(10), must deduct the cost of trips from the total yearly transportation cost. In other words, costs may not be included in the pro rata costs which determine the charge to sending districts.

Accurate and complete accounting records must be kept so that the cost of transportation to and from school may be ascertained.

DIVISION IV
USE OF SCHOOL BUSES

281—43.10(285) Permitted uses listed. School buses may be used to transport pupils under the following conditions:

43.10(1) The program is a part of the regular or extracurricular program of a public school and has been so adopted and made a matter of record in the minutes of all the boards involved.

43.10(2) The pupils are enrolled in a public school.

43.10(3) The program or activity must be sponsored by a school or group of schools cooperatively and be under the direct control of a qualified teacher or recreational or playground director of a school district.

a. A regularly certificated teacher must be in charge of the program. Several or all schools may engage the same instructor on a cooperative basis.

b. In transporting pupils to Red Cross swimming classes a superintendent of schools may be designated by action of the district board as the supervisor or director of the activity and may use the Red Cross instructor to carry on the actual instruction in swimming.

c. If the Red Cross instructor holds a regular teacher's certificate issued by the board of educational examiners, the instructor can be named as general supervisor of the activity by the several schools.

43.10(4) The bus shall be driven by a regularly approved driver holding an appropriate driver's license and a school bus driver's authorization. In addition, the buses must be accompanied by a member of the faculty or other employee of the school or a parent or other adult volunteer as authorized by a school administrator who will be responsible for the conduct and the general supervision of the pupils on the bus and at the place of the activity. If the faculty member is an approved driver, that person can act both as a driver and faculty sponsor.

43.10(5) School buses may be used by an organization of, or sponsoring activities for, senior citizens, children, handicapped, and other persons and groups, and for transportation of persons other than pupils to activities in which pupils from the school are participants or are attending the activity or for which the school is a sponsor under the following conditions:

a. The "school bus" signs shall be covered and the flashing warning lamps and stop arm made inoperable when the bus is being used in a nonschool-sponsored activity.

b. Transportation outside the state of Iowa shall not be provided without the approval of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration of the United States Department of Transportation.

c. A chaperone shall accompany each bus to assist the passengers in boarding and disembarking from the bus and to aid them in case of illness or injury.

d. The driver of the bus shall be approved by the local board of education and must possess an appropriate driver's license and a school bus driver's authorization.

e. The driver of the bus shall observe the maximum speed limits for school buses at all times.

43.10(6) Seating.

a. Each passenger shall have a comfortable seat.

b. Student passengers shall have a minimum of 13 inches of allowable seating per person.

c. For adult groups, no more than two persons shall occupy a 39-inch seat.

d. Standees are prohibited in all situations, whether the bus is transporting students or adults.

e. The maximum number of passengers shall never exceed the rated capacity of the vehicle as it is equipped.

281—43.11(285) Teacher transportation. Public school teachers who are transported should be included in the average number transported and should be charged the pro rata cost by the transporting district.

DIVISION V
THE BUS DRIVER

281—43.12(285) Driver qualifications. General character and emotional stability are qualities which must be given careful consideration by boards of education in the selection of school bus drivers. Elements that should be considered in setting a character standard are:

1. Reliability or dependability.
2. Initiative, self-reliance, and leadership.
3. Ability to get along with others.
4. Freedom from use of undesirable language.
5. Personal habits of cleanliness.
6. Moral conduct above reproach.
7. Honesty.
8. Freedom from addiction to narcotics or habit-forming drugs.
9. Freedom from addiction to alcoholic beverages or liquors.

281—43.13(285) Stability factors. Factors to be considered in determining emotional stability are:

- 43.13(1)** Patience.
- 43.13(2)** Considerateness.
- 43.13(3)** Even temperament.
- 43.13(4)** Calmness under stress.

281—43.14(285) Driver age. School bus drivers must be at least 18 years of age on or before August 1 preceding the opening of the school year for which a school bus driver's authorization is required.

281—43.15(285) Physical fitness. Except for insulin-dependent diabetics, an applicant for a school bus driver's authorization must undergo a biennial physical examination by a licensed physician or surgeon, osteopathic physician or surgeon, osteopath, qualified doctor of chiropractic, licensed physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner. The applicant must submit annually to the applicant's employer the signed medical examiner's certificate (pursuant to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations 49 CFR Sections 391.41 to 391.49), indicating, among other requirements, sufficient physical capacity to operate the bus effectively and to render assistance to the passengers in case of illness or injury, and freedom from any communicable disease. At the discretion of the chief administrator or designee of the employer or prospective employer, the chief administrator or designee shall evaluate the applicant's ability in operating a school bus, including all safety equipment, in providing assistance to passengers in evacuation of the school bus, and in performing other duties required of a school bus driver.

281—43.16(285) Tests for tuberculosis. Rescinded IAB 8/16/06, effective 9/20/06.

281—43.17(285) Insulin-dependent diabetics. A person who is an insulin-dependent diabetic may qualify to be a school bus driver if the person meets all qualifications of Iowa Code subsection 321.375(3). Such driver is subject to an annual physical examination by a qualified medical examiner as listed in rule 281—43.15(285).

281—43.18(285) Authorization to be carried by driver. Every school bus driver shall carry a copy of the driver's school bus driver's authorization at all times when the driver is acting in that capacity.

281—43.19(285) Vision requirements. Rescinded IAB 12/8/04, effective 1/12/05.

281—43.20(285) Hearing requirements. Rescinded IAB 12/8/04, effective 1/12/05.

281—43.21(285) Experience, traffic law knowledge and driving record. No driver applicant shall be employed or allowed to transport students until the board determines that the applicant has an acceptable driving record, demonstrates the ability to safely operate the vehicle(s) representative of the vehicle(s) required to be operated during employment and is knowledgeable of traffic laws and regulations pertaining to the operation of a school bus.

281—43.22(321) Fee collection and distribution of funds. The department of education, commencing with the biannual school bus inspections for the 2002-2003 school year and each year thereafter, shall assess a fee for each school bus or allowable alternative vehicle (pursuant to rule 761—911.7(321)) inspected by the department. The department shall present for payment a fee statement to the owner of each school bus or allowable alternative vehicle inspected.

The department of education shall submit an annual budget request for an amount equal to 100 percent of the total projected fees to be collected during the next fiscal year which shall be based on an amount equal to the number of school bus and allowable alternative vehicle inspections completed during the previous school year multiplied by the inspection fee authorized by statute.

One component of the annual budget shall be an annual “school bus driver and passenger safety education plan.” The plan shall outline the projects and activities to be included during each year. These projects and activities may include, but not be limited to, curriculum development costs, printing and distribution of safety literature and manuals, purchase of equipment used in conducting school bus safety education programs, and other expenditures deemed appropriate by the department of education.

281—43.23(285) Application form. The school bus driver and the board of education shall submit an application for the school bus driver’s authorization annually, and upon a form prescribed by the department of education.

281—43.24(321) Authorization denials and revocations. A person who believes that a school bus driver who holds an authorization issued by the department of education or who seeks a school bus authorization has committed acts in violation of Iowa Code subsection 321.375(2) or rule 43.12(285) may file a complaint with the department against the driver or applicant. The department shall notify the driver or applicant that a complaint has been filed and shall provide the driver or applicant with a copy of the complaint. A hearing shall be set for the purpose of determining whether the bus driver’s authorization shall be denied, suspended, or revoked, or whether the bus driver should receive a reprimand or warning. Hearing procedures in 281—Chapter 6 shall be applicable to such proceedings.

DIVISION VI
PURCHASE OF BUSES

281—43.25(285) Local board procedure. The board of education shall proceed as follows in purchasing school buses:

43.25(1) Use separate specification and bid request sheets. (Iowa Code section 285.10(7)“b” requires body and chassis to be bought on separate contracts unless the bus is constructed as an integral unit, inseparable as to body and chassis, by the manufacturer or is used or demonstrator bus.)

43.25(2) Notify body and chassis dealers of intent to purchase school transportation equipment and request bids.

43.25(3) Reserve right to reject all bids.

43.25(4) Require all bids to be on comparable equipment which meets all state and federal requirements.

43.25(5) Hold an open meeting for dealers to present merits of their equipment.

43.25(6) Review bids, tabulate all bids, make a record of action taken.

43.25(7) Sign separate contracts or orders for purchase of body and chassis. Purchase agreement must provide that dealer will deliver equipment which will pass initial state inspection at no further cost to school and further provide that school board shall withhold at least \$150 until vehicle passes initial state inspection.

43.25(8) Notify the bureau of nutrition programs and school transportation of the state department of education of purchase and date of delivery so that arrangements can be made for the initial school bus inspection. No school bus can be put into service until it has passed a pre-use inspection conducted pursuant to Form TR-F-27B by the local board of education and the form has been provided to the bureau of nutrition programs and school transportation. The initial school bus inspection will be conducted at the earliest possible time convenient to the school and the department of education.

281—43.26(285) Financing. The board of education may finance purchase of transportation equipment as follows:

43.26(1) The board may pay all of the cost of each bus from funds on hand in general fund.

43.26(2) Bonds may be voted to purchase equipment, and funds so derived shall be used for that purpose.

281—43.27 to 43.29 Reserved.

DIVISION VII
MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS

281—43.30(285) Semiannual inspection. To facilitate the semiannual inspection program, school and school district officials shall send their buses to inspection centers as scheduled. A sufficient number of drivers or other school personnel shall be available at the inspection to operate the equipment for the inspectors. The fee for each vehicle inspected shall be \$20 effective July 1, 2005; \$25 effective July 1, 2007; and \$28 effective July 1, 2009.

281—43.31(285) Maintenance record. School officials shall cause the chassis of all buses and allowable alternative vehicles, whether publicly or privately owned, to be inspected annually and all necessary repairs made before the vehicle is put into service. The inspection and repairs shall be recorded on a form (TR-F-27A) prescribed by the department of education. The completed form (TR-F-27A) shall be signed by the mechanic and carried in the glove compartment of the bus.

281—43.32(285) Drivers' schools. All school bus drivers shall attend classes or schools of instruction as approved by the department of education and provided for in Iowa Code subsection 321.376(2). The course of instruction for new drivers, to be successfully completed within the first six months of employment, shall also include the annual course of instruction for the school year in which the new driver is hired. All current school bus drivers shall attend the only annual course of instruction, unless the current driver misses a year of instruction. Upon missing a year of instruction, a current driver shall successfully complete the course of instruction for new drivers prior to receiving an authorization.

281—43.33(285) Insurance. The board of education shall carry insurance on all school-owned buses and see that insurance is carried by all contractors engaged in transporting pupils for the district in the coverages and limits as determined by the board of education.

281—43.34(285) Contract—privately owned buses. The board of education and a contractor who undertakes to transport school pupils for the board, in privately owned vehicles, shall sign a contract substantially similar to that prescribed by the department of education (Form TR-F-4-497). The contract shall contain the following provisions:

43.34(1) To furnish and operate at the contractor's own expense a legally approved vehicle of transportation (or a legally approved chassis on which may be mounted a school bus body supplied and maintained by the board of education) to and from the
school each day beginning on the date set by the board over route as described,
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transporting only children attending the school designated by the board of education.

43.34(2) To comply with all legal and established uniform standards of operation as required by statute or by legally constituted authorities.

43.34(3) To comply with all uniform standards, established for protection of health and safety for pupils transported.

43.34(4) To comply with all rules and regulations adopted by the board of education for the protection of the children, or to govern the conduct of driver of bus.

43.34(5) To keep bus in good mechanical condition and up to standards required by statutes or by legally constituted authorities.

43.34(6) To take school bus to official inspection when held by state authorities with no additional expense to party of second part.

43.34(7) To see that the bus is swept and the windows cleaned each day and that registration plates and all lights are cleaned before each trip. Further, that the bus is washed and the floor swept and scrubbed with a good disinfectant each week. In case of an epidemic the entire bus shall be washed with a disinfectant.

43.34(8) To use only drivers and substitute drivers who have been approved by the board of education and have received a school bus driver's authorization.

43.34(9) To furnish the board of education an approved certificate of medical examination for each person who is approved by the board of education to drive the bus.

43.34(10) To attend a school of instruction for bus drivers as prescribed by the bureau of nutrition programs and school transportation of the department of education. (If the owner does not drive the bus, the regular approved driver of the bus shall attend.).

43.34(11) To carry insurance on bus and pupils in the coverages and limits as determined by the board of education. Copy of policy to be filed with superintendent of schools.

43.34(12) To make such reports as may be required by state department of education, area education agency board of education, and superintendent of schools.

43.34(13) That the school bus shall be used only for transporting regularly enrolled students to and from public school and to extracurricular activities approved and designated by the board of education and further to comply with all legal restrictions on use of bus.

43.34(14) To obtain, if possible, the registration numbers of all cars violating the school bus passing law, Iowa Code section 321.372 and file information for prosecution.

43.34(15) The board of education hereby reserves the right to change routing of the bus and, if additional mileage is required, it shall be at an extra cost not exceeding \$ per additional mile per month. If shortened

43.34(16) The use of alcoholic beverages or immoral conduct by the contractor or driver employed by the contractor shall automatically cancel this contract as provided in Iowa Code section 321.375.

43.34(17) Contract may be terminated on 90-day notice by either party, Iowa Code section 285.5(4).

43.34(18) The contractor agrees that, if the contractor desires to terminate the contract, the school bus will be sold to the board of education at its request as provided in Iowa Code section 285.5(1). (This requirement does not apply to a passenger auto used as a school bus.)

43.34(19) It is further agreed that the board of education reserves the right to withhold and retain as property of the board of education two weeks' salary pending complete compliance with terms of contract or for the bus driver's being avoidably late.

281—43.35(285) Contract—district-owned buses. The board of education and a private individual undertaking to transport school pupils for the board in school district-owned vehicles shall sign a contract substantially similar to that prescribed by the department of education (Form TR-F-5-497(revised)). The contract shall contain the following provisions:

43.35(1) To conform to all rules of the board of education in and for the district adopted for the protection of the children and to govern the conduct of the person in charge of the conveyance.

43.35(2) To make reports as may be required by the state department of education, area education agency, or superintendent of schools.

43.35(3) To conform to all standards for operation of the school buses as required by statute or by legally constituted authorities.

43.35(4) That the employee shall be entitled to benefits as outlined in the school board policy for the school district.

43.35(5) To attend a school of instruction for bus drivers as prescribed by the bureau of nutrition and school transportation of the department of education.

43.35(6) That the employer can terminate the contract and dismiss the employee for failure to conform to all laws of the state of Iowa and rules promulgated by the Iowa department of education applicable to drivers of school buses.

43.35(7) That this contract shall not be in force until the driver presents an official school bus driver's authorization.

281—43.36(285) Accident reports. The superintendent of schools shall make a report to the bureau of nutrition and school transportation of the department of education on any accident involving any vehicle in use as a school bus. The driver of the bus shall cooperate with the superintendent in making the report. The report shall be made on the department of transportation Iowa Accident Report Form.

281—43.37(285) Railroad crossings. The driver of any school bus shall bring the bus to a complete stop at all railroad crossings, as required in Iowa Code section 321.343, regardless of whether or not there are any pupils in the bus, and regardless of whether or not there is an automatic signal at the crossing. After stopping, the driver shall open the entrance door, look and listen for approaching trains and shall not proceed to cross the tracks until it is safe to do so.

281—43.38(285) Driver restrictions.

43.38(1) The driver of a school bus shall not smoke when there are passengers on the bus.

43.38(2) The driver shall not permit firearms to be carried in the bus.

43.38(3) The driver shall not fill the fuel tank while the motor is running or when there are passengers on the bus.

281—43.39(285) Civil defense projects. Civil defense projects may be recognized by the board of directors of any school district as an authorized extracurricular activity under the following conditions:

43.39(1) Such activity may take the form of, but need not be restricted to:

a. First-aid classes.

b. Study and distribution of materials relating to community survival, fallout shelters, radiation detection, and other pertinent disaster measures.

c. Exercises and field trips related to the above matters.

d. Cooperation with local, state and national authorities, both civil and military, and interested organizations, in carrying out civil defense exercises and in planning and making preparations for passive defense in time of actual emergency.

43.39(2) The use of school buses for field trips and exercises, and the planned use of school buses in connection with actual emergency procedures to be carried on in cooperation with local, state or national authorities, civil or military, is hereby defined as properly incident to such authorized extracurricular activity.

43.39(3) All such projects, except an actual emergency operation where time is of the essence, shall have prior approval of the state department of education.

43.39(4) The bus shall be driven by an approved driver holding an appropriate driver's license and a regular school bus driver's authorization except that in actual emergency situations, where regular drivers are not available, certain other drivers, including students and teachers, may be used providing the following conditions are met. The driver shall:

a. Be approved by the local board of education.

b. Be at least 18 years of age, be physically and mentally competent, and not possess personal or moral habits which would be detrimental to the best interests of the safety and welfare of the children transported.

43.39(5) Rescinded IAB 12/8/04, effective 1/12/05.

281—43.40(285) Pupil instruction. At least twice during each school year, each pupil who is transported in a school vehicle shall be instructed in safe riding practices and participate in emergency evacuation drills.

281—43.41(285) Trip inspections. A pretrip inspection of each school bus shall be performed and recorded prior to each trip. A written report shall be submitted promptly to the superintendent of schools, transportation supervisor, school bus mechanic, or other person charged with the responsibility for the school transportation program, if any defects or deficiencies are discovered that may affect the safety of the vehicle's operation or result in its mechanical breakdown. A posttrip inspection of the interior of the school bus shall be performed after each trip.

281—43.42(285) Loading and unloading areas. Restricted loading and unloading areas shall be established for school buses at, or near schools.

281—43.43(285) Communication equipment. Each school bus shall have a two-way communications system or cellular telephone capable of emergency communication between the driver of the bus and the school's base of operations for school transportation.

DIVISION VIII
COMMON CARRIERS

281—43.44(285) Standards for common carriers. These standards are intended to apply to any vehicle operated by a common carrier when used exclusively for student transportation to and from school.

43.44(1) Vehicles.

a. The vehicles need not be painted yellow and black as required for conventional school buses.

b. The vehicles shall, while transporting children to and from school, be equipped with temporary signs, located conspicuously on the front and back of the vehicle. The sign on the front shall have the words “School Bus” printed in black letters not less than six inches high, on a background of national school bus glossy yellow. The sign on the rear shall be at least ten square feet in size and shall be painted national school bus glossy yellow, and have the words “School Bus” printed in black letters not less than eight inches high. The yellow is to be in accordance with the colorimetric specification of Federal Standard No. 595a, Color 13432; the black matching Federal Standard 595a, Color 17038. Both the six-inch and eight-inch letters shall be Series “D” as specified in the Standard Alphabet—Federal Highway Administration, 1966.

c. Rescinded, effective 8/11/82.

43.44(2) Drivers.

a. The driver shall have an appropriate driver’s license issued by the Iowa department of transportation.

b. The driver shall possess a school bus driver’s authorization issued by the Iowa department of education.

c. The driver shall receive training in accordance with state requirements for school bus drivers.

43.44(3) Seating.

a. Each passenger shall have a comfortable seat.

b. Stantees are prohibited.

43.44(4) Loading and unloading procedures.

a. Vehicle shall pull close enough to curb to prevent another vehicle from passing on right side.

b. If vehicle is not equipped with flashing warning lights or stop arm, or if use of this equipment is prohibited by law, the pupils, on unloading, shall be instructed to remain at the curb until bus has pulled away and it is safe for them to cross the street.

43.44(5) Inspection of vehicles.

a. Drivers shall be required to perform daily pretrip inspections of their vehicles and to report promptly and in writing any defects or deficiencies discovered that may affect the safety of the vehicle’s operation or result in its mechanical breakdown in accordance with rule 43.41(285).

b. Vehicles shall be inspected semiannually by personnel of the department of education in accordance with the provisions of Iowa Code section 285.8(4).

43.44(6) Other requirements.

a. Local school officials shall provide the carrier with passenger conduct rules and the driver shall abide by the policies and procedures established by the local district.

b. The carrier shall make a report to the bureau of nutrition and school transportation of the department of education on any accident involving property damage or personal injury while a vehicle is being used as a school bus. The report shall be made on the Iowa Accident Report Form.

c. Student instruction for passenger safety shall be the responsibility of the local school district as specified in rule 43.40(285).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 285.1.

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